NOVA SCOTIA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

STATEMENT OF MANDATE (March 30, 2010)

2010-2011

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1. Message from the Minister and the Director & CEO

We are pleased to present the 2010-2011 Statement of Mandate for the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission (NSHRC). This plan sets out the NSHRC's strategic direction for the fiscal year.

Last year, the NSHRC embarked on a new vision to become a trusted leader and promoter of human rights in Nova Scotia by strengthening our relationships with government and the public. These relationships will enable the NSHRC to more effectively deliver its dual mandate: human rights dispute resolution and eliminating barriers to full participation in society through education, training and consultation, including policy advice.

In the 2010-2011 fiscal year, the NSHRC will continue to make efficiencies at all stages of the dispute resolution process while remaining focused on the earliest resolution possible. The guiding principle is continuous improvement while providing the best service possible to Nova Scotians.

Recognizing the importance of preventing discrimination, the NSHRC will maintain a strong emphasis on education and training. The NSHRC will enhance the assistance it provides to organizations and businesses in exploring diversity in the workplace and preventing discriminatory practices.

The NSHRC will continue to make the best possible use of its human and financial resources by identifying creative and innovative ways to meet its mandate. Responsible management of resources will ensure that our common vision of a society characterized by enhanced equity/ social diversity is advanced.

Moving Nova Scotia toward becoming a centre of excellence in human rights reflects the priority government places on building strong and safe communities. All citizens deserve the opportunity to thrive at work and in their communities.

Hon. Ross Landry
Minister Responsible for the N.S. Human Rights Act

Krista Daley
Director and CEO, Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

2. Mandate

The NSHRC has a unique role within Nova Scotia. It is an independent government agency charged with administering the Nova Scotia *Human Rights Act*, a provincial statute created in 1969 with the most recent amendments in July 2009. The NSHRC has a dual mandate - human rights dispute resolution and eliminating barriers to full participation in society through education, training and consultation, including policy advice.

The specific duties of the NSHRC are set out in the Act as follows:

- administer and enforce the provisions of this Act;
- develop a program of public information and education in the field of human rights to forward the principle that every person is free and equal in dignity and rights without regard to race, religion, creed, colour or ethnic or national origin;
- conduct research and encourage research by universities and other bodies in the general field of human rights;
- advise and assist government departments and co-ordinate their activities as far as these activities concern human rights;
- advise the Government on suggestions, recommendations and requests made by private organizations and individuals;
- co-operate with and assist any person, organization or body concerned with human rights, within or outside the Province;
- report as required by the Minister on the business and activities of the Commission; and
- consider, investigate or administer any matter or activity referred to the Commission by the Governor in Council or the Minister.

3. Vision and Purpose

In 2009, the NSHRC developed a new vision and created strategic goals in order to fulfill its mandate. This was done after extensive consultation with staff and Commissioners.

Vision

The NSHRC is a trusted leader, protector and promoter of human rights. Through sharing its knowledge and engaging Nova Scotians in discussion on human rights issues, the NSHRC is committed to affirming and promoting human rights.

Strategic Goals

The NSHRC has identified six strategic goals:

1. Continue to promote a workplace that is dynamic, embraces differences and fosters continuous learning.

2. Provide fair, easily accessible and cost effective services that are in accordance with the NS *Human Rights Act.*

3. Engage with racially visible people, women, Aboriginal people and persons with disabilities, to ensure their realities are reflected and celebrated in the work of the NSHRC.

4. Strengthen existing partnerships while collaborating with organizations who share similar values to reduce systemic discrimination, and strengthen the ability of individuals and communities to address issues of discrimination.

5. Advise and assist the government of Nova Scotia in its goal of achieving equitable access to opportunities and services for every individual.

6. Ensure people in all communities of Nova Scotia are engaged in meaningful discussion on human rights issues and diversity, to improve the lives of all Nova Scotians.

4. Performance Measures

Access to fair and effective processes					
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**DATA Base Year 2008-09**	**TARGET March 2011**	**TRENDS[1]**	**STRATEGIC ACTIONS**
Dispute Resolution processes are fair, effective and accessible	Average time to finalize a case at the intake stage (upon receipt of an Intake Questionnaire)	6 mos	4 mos	6.1 mos (at Jan 31/10)	-Implement administrative support role for intake function -Adapt assessment protocols to eliminate file processing deficit (files in vs. files out)
	Average time to finalize an investigation	N/A	20 mos	25 mos (at Jan 31/10)	-Design and implement case management program, including standards for investigation time lines -Improve use of Section 29(4) dispositions for early resolution -Implement administrative support role for investigation function - Initiate review of investigation services to improve quality and timeliness of outcomes

[1] Only internal trends will be reported for this fiscal year. Comparisons with other jurisdictions will be reported in future years.

	Average time to finalize mediation from point of referral to final approval of settlement agreement	6.5 mos	6 mos	7.6 mos (at Jan 31/10)	-Complete mediation review project to identify opportunities to improve mediation service -Implement review project recommendations -Enforce strict time lines for mediators for completing settlement agreements
	Average time to finalize settlement follow-up (training, policy review, etc.)	12 mos	11 mos[2]	11 mos (at Jan 31/10)	Develop strategy to enhance: - Case management using computerized system - Reporting on time frame for completion of follow-up
	% of BOI's that resolve prior to a BOI decision being rendered	57%	60%	N/A	- Reduce the number of disputes that result in a hearing by initiating settlement
	Average amount of time (months) after referral to a BOI to resolve the complaint (settled or adjudicated)	11 months	10 months	N/A	-Initiate settlement at the earliest possible moment -If necessary, NSHRC initiates contact with Chair to arrange hearing dates as soon as appointment is finalized

[2] The target for 2010-2011 has been maintained at 11 months following review of our trends.

Better informed public on indicators and impact of discrimination					
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**DATA Base Year 2008-09**	**TARGET March 2011**	**TRENDS**	**STRATEGIC ACTIONS**
The public is better informed about indicators and impact of discrimination	Number of voluntary requests for products and services	75% Consult 60% Training	85% Consult 75% Train	83% Consult 65% Train (at Jan 31/10)	-Develop a plan to promote our products to new clients -Develop a strategy to manage increased requests including partnering with other agencies
	Number of sustainable strategic partners	2	5[3]	3 (at Jan 31/10)	-Seek new partners for collaboration on human rights events -Increase workshops on areas of discrimination other than employment (residence, service provision, volunteers, etc.) -Continue to improve current partnerships -Build capacity by partnering with community agencies in delivery of workshops and education sessions

[3] The target for 2010-2011 has been reduced from 15 to 5 due to a change in the definition of "sustainable, strategic partnership".

Access to a fair and (cost) effective process					
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**DATA Base Year 2009-10** [4]	**TARGET March 2011**	**TRENDS**	**STRATEGIC ACTIONS**
Processes for addressing disputes are fair and cost effective	Average costs per mediation case	N/A	20%	10% (at Jan 31/10)	-Reduce the hourly rate for roster mediators - Reduce the number of billable hours for roster mediators
	Average costs **per day** for BOI [5]	N/A	10%[6]		-Explore more cost-effective space for BOI hearings -Use oral recording systems rather than transcription services

[4] The reporting of statistics began in the 2009-10 year when in-house legal counsel was hired.

[5] The unit measurement was changed from "average cost of a BOI" to "average costs per day of a BOI" as a more meaningful measurement. The length of a BOI, and therefore the global cost is an uncontrollable variable.

[6] The target for reduction in cost was reduced from 20% to 10% for 2010-2011 because most BOI costs are fixed.

5. Budget Context and Budget

Budget Context

Budget

Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission			
	2009-2010 Estimate ($thousands)	2009-2010 Forecast ($thousands)	2010-2011 Estimate ($thousands)
Gross Departmental Expenses:	2,144	2,317	2,200